

AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT!

Mediascene

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER \$1.50

**THIS
ISSUE:**

THE MAKING OF A
VISUAL NOVEL

**GIL KANE
RICH CORBEN
R.E. HOWARD**

MASTER OF THE MACABRE

**BERNI
WRIGHTSON**

THE MAD WORLD OF
JACK DAVIS

WALTER GIBSON
OPENS THE SECRET FILES
**THE SHADOW
RETURNS**

MALCOLM McDOWELL
ROYAL FLASH



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A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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flash

"I never know what to expect!" That's one of the things I hear most from MEDIASCENE readers when they describe the magazine—and we wouldn't have it any other way. We feel the element of surprise is an asset to the publication, and do our best to build it into the basic structure of every issue.

As we see it, few things could be worse in a magazine such as MEDIASCENE than to be taken for granted—or to put it less politely, dull. It seems too many media publications (whether they're about comics, film, or any other entertainment) have become predictable, inept and unimaginative. We're not saying we haven't contributed our share of media pollution, and we plead guilty to a charge of occasional pretension (since it's our enthusiasm), but we think we've managed to keep MEDIASCENE alive with ideas and concepts.

As far as we're concerned, that's the bottom line.

Do feel free, however, to take for granted our quality reproduction, our dynamic graphics, our careful selection of material, our irreverent typography, our energetic approach, our unimpeachable humility, and our sense of humor.

NO, we will not be surprised to discover you're surprised with some of the material that's coming up in future issues of MEDIASCENE. And that's good! Move on our upcoming piece on Lester. Let's take a look at what's ahead this issue. At this writing, one of the most exciting ventures relating to the comic art medium has appeared on the horizon: a pair of graphic novels which hold the promise of beginning a trend in that direction. To get the full story, MEDIASCENE is reprinting Kane's *Git Kane*, in the case, who just happens to be the guiding light behind the project.

We first heard about the book a year or more ago, when Gil phoned to discuss the possibility of collaborating on the art (*Kane pencils, Stewako inks*). The request was met with mild surprise as we've never considered inking one of our strong points. The challenge of working with a skillful storyteller and designer like Gil Kane seemed quite appealing, and we agreed to discuss the possibility sometime in the near future. That meeting, however, was never to take place, due to an excessive number of commitments on our part which included the editorialship of this magazine.

Unlike most of his peers, Kane had previously scored with two endeavors independent of his weighty comic work, *Nile: A Sea and a Bloodmark*. Though they were less than notable and financial successes, both were nonetheless important and noble experiments aimed at expanding the narrow perimeter of visual storytelling.

Where others would have thrown in the towel, Kane seemed more determined than ever to continue the fight. His approach and style are considerably stronger this time. Kane has mounted a double-barreled campaign to capture the market with his own epic, *The Flame Horse*, and has followed up with a second entry, illustrated by Richard Corben over a Robert E. Howard story. Both books have black and white interiors and are 100 pages in length, more than enough to deliver a knockout punch—if the timing is right.

The European market is swelling with hardcover comics in many formats (Kane obviously isn't over his love for foreign comicbooks), while American attempts have been somewhat less than spectacular. Two recent offerings immediately come to

mind: Jim McQuade's excellent *Misty*, and Bernie Hogarth's headbunt *Twain*. Kane knows that part of the problem lies in educating the buyer, the consumer who can get almost 100 pages of comic art (less Kane and Corben) in a stack of comics for a dollar or two. Kane's publications cost \$12.95.

There will be resistance, but the eventual outcome of the matter will prove edifying—and will point the way for more (or less) of this kind of experiment. Currently, Kane's *Flame Horse* is scheduled for a Christmas release. Corben's *King of the Northern Abyss* should go on sale sometime in mid-November. SUPERGRAPHICS will carry both books upon their publication.

Phil Seuling, Don Glut and Don McGregor, who went right to the source for a revealing, behind-the-scenes look at Kane's latest venture. The resulting article reflects on the reasons for the reactions which went into the making of the books. Keep it all in mind when you read them.

If you enjoyed Richard Lester's *Muskeeter* films, you'll make it a point to see his latest historical entertainment, *Royal Flash*. MEDIASCENE Special Features Editor, Eric Van Luxemburg, previews the film and gives us a first hand profile of its star, Malcolm McDowell. Beginning with this issue, Eric will be a regular contributor to these pages in addition to writing for magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Og*. Should you find yourself reading his features as soon as the issue arrives, remember you read it here first.

Though our format is flexible enough to accommodate almost any kind of material, one feature continues to draw reader approval—film news. As usual, this issue

covers the upcoming season with a detailed words and pictures report guaranteed to keep you up-to-date on the film scene.

You'll discover a special focus on comic art this issue (and in future issues) highlighted by an exclusive interview with one of the most popular and pre-eminent illustrators on the scene today, Berni Wrightson. From where we sit, Wrightson leads the field in the suspense and horror genres, so we seemed positively justified to turn the interview over to an old friend of ours who specializes in writing about the macabre, Don McGregor. You'll find their resulting dialogue at least as refreshing as an open grave. Enjoy it!

MEDIASCENE staffer Joel Thingwill gives us an incisive look at America's most successful pop artist in his personality profile of Jack Davis. If you think you can judge an artist by his work, well! you need this piece in keeping with the issue's emphasis, you'll find the comic news expanded by a hefty 25%. Please don't applaud. Just throw money!

Most MEDIASCENE readers must be aware by this time of the death of Vaughn Bodie. We felt it fitting, and necessary, considering his last testament appeared in the previous issue of this magazine, to present the truth about this tragedy, and say a final word about a friend.

Much of the thrust of last year's success was predicated by the extensive coverage of Barry Smith and his work. The mail response was sizeable and convinced us that working together might produce some truly extraordinary results. To begin with, we've pleased to stock a number of Smith print and publications, several of

which are shown here for the first time. More surprises will follow.

Walter Gibson also Maxwell Grant concludes his two-part feature on *The Origin of The Shadow*—and foreshadows a special issue in the next issue on the subject. *The Shadow*, complete with step-by-step photos of the painting's progress, included will be a host of unpublished, rough and studies, along with running commentary both from artists and should find interesting.

While we're on the subject, we might as well give a hint to some of the features planned for the months ahead: a photo spectacular on the 50 RAREST PULPS, a mini-history of *THE GREAT DETECTIVES*, pictorial coverage of the new SF film *LOGAN'S RUN*, a preview of Frank Herbert's third *DUNE* novel, a COMPLETE STERANKO COMIC STORY—the first in five years, and a series of exclusive interviews with artists, packed with unpublished sketches. Make sure you're with us!

We Saved The Best For Last Dept: Because of the overwhelming success of our double issues, we are increasing the size of MEDIASCENE to that format beginning with this issue. Current subscriptions will be reduced on a two-for-one basis. Single issues will sell for \$1.50. Yearly subs for \$7.50 (\$1.50 savings). Though it's double our work, we hope it's double your fun.

If you want to tell us your thoughts, write—or see us personally. We'll be appearing at the *Shawnee 4 Convention* in Detroit, October 30 to November 2. Guests, films, dealers and the usual harem will prevail. Be sure to catch our awesome painting exhibit, an even draw.

Til then, take care. ®
STERANKO

SUBSCRIBERS—PLEASE NOTE: THIS DOUBLE ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO!





A PHOTO PREVIEW OF RICHARD LESTER'S NEW SWASHBUCKLING SATIRE BY ERIC VAN LUSTBADER

Malcolm McDowell is a clever young man. In person he is nothing like his screen image, much more relaxed. But he does have a disquieting tendency to play narrow cellist, venturing fellows who nevertheless, by dint of a combination of charm, luck, and sheer bludgeon-mindedness, triumph in the end.

McDowell, perhaps best known for his remarkable portrayal of Alex, the antihero hero of *A Clockwork Orange*, the new in a plush beige suit in New York's Plaza Hotel, not at all the cocky little imp one might expect him to be. He is bright, intelligent and beautiful, with open features derisive for weakness like eyes. He appears a happy person, self-assured but without any ego-laden wholeness. Disarming, but he has definite opinions on just about everything. His latest film is *20th-Century Fox's* *Bay of Scars*, directed by Richard Lester, the history of which is quite interesting. Traditionally, English children were brought up on a book called *Tin Drums* by Heinrich Böll, written by Thomas Hughes. The main villain in the novel is a brain-belly by the name of Harry Flashman. Contemporary author George MacDonald Fraser got the bright idea to take the Flashman character and create a series of pseudo-historical novels around him.

Written as the reminiscences of the older Flashman, set against the historical backgrounds of India, Afghanistan, England, and the Balkans in the mid-Seventeenth Century, the books paint an outrageous but hilarious portrait of Harry Flashman, Victorian soldier-brother, coward, drunk, lecher.

The series begins thusly: "... You will have heard, in *Ten Bells*, how I was expelled from Rugby School for drunkenness, which, I am sure enough, but when Hughes alleges that this was the result of my deliberately getting beat on top of a goose-pick, he is an artist. I know better than to mix my drivel, even at seventeen."

Why better to collaborate on this project than Malcolm McDowell and Richard Lester, one of the brightest talents in modern pictures, rocketed to prominence in 1968 with the release of a black and white film called *A Hard Day's Night*, starring four British lads.

His most recent projects have involved, coincidentally enough, George MacDonald Fraser, who wrote the screenplays for Lester's films, *The Three Musketeers* (The Musketeers) and *The Four Musketeers* (The Musketeers) released in 1973 and 1974, respectively.

"Richard is a comic," Malcolm confesses, "a comic with serious overtones, which is much better than the other way round, because his perspective is so unusual. It's also an effect more difficult to pull off."

He turns slightly against the light streaming through the large windows to get a better view of Fifth Avenue below. "Stanley (Kubrick) is altogether different. I can't say I had the best time working for him. He's got his way in the way too often. I've not played with the final results of *Clockwork* simply because I know how much more was there. You see, there were so many realistic shots of us that he can't cut it made for a cold effect. You know Stanley does all his cutting with a videotape machine. He never does live audiences or meets the actors or actresses before they are hired. It's crazy, really. "Now, Lindsay (Anderson), who directed Malcolm's brilliant performance in 1972's *O Lucky Man!* never could have directed *Clockwork*—you know he was offered the film before Stanley—his taste humanistic. He's a party really, and that film was such a collaborative effort."

Bay of Scars is in fact based on the second of the Flashman novels (currently there are four in the series, available from Signet in paper). Why not start at the beginning of the series one might ask. Well, the first book deals almost entirely with Flashman's exploits as a soldier in India. It is long and despite the amusing moments quite harrowing in its depiction of the bloody clash between British and native. Not at all Lester's cup of tea. Nor was for that matter.

Bay of Scars opens in England after Flashman has returned from the conflict, festooned with decorations and medals for bravery—all of which, we see in a brief flashback, are quite undeserved. That, of course, is the essence of Flashman. He addresses the graduating class of Eton, his "boys" (he's against) the background of a man with British blood—immediately setting the tone of the film. This parody of the opening of *Peter*

is perfect and perfectly conceived because the joke puts into cinematic terms the tone of Fraser's literary series.

It becomes clear how this film is a more mature Lester. Gone is the scatterbrain visual-joke technique, indiscriminate and over-playing, that marked some of his previous films such as *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*. Gone is the arcane experimentation that marked films like *Petulia*. And, as the film progresses, we notice that the inconsistencies in plot, the episodic nature of scenes, the lack of pacing, which were trademarks of the *Musketeers* films, have also disappeared.

In fact it would be safe to say that with the sole exception of *Juggernaut*, *Bay of Scars* is Richard Lester's finest recent film.

Malcolm confided, "There's a good bit of Flashman in all of us"

And what of McDowell? From the moment he gets caught in a brothel raid and, escaping, seeks sanctuary in the cottage of a lady, we know that he is perfect for the part. Malcolm is Harry Flashman, brash, cocky, in the end and cowardly, yet above all, immensely appealing. We must that the corollary he chooses belongs to the infamous *Lord of the Flies* (played by Freddie Fox) as the one that he builds the lady's secret. Ode to Flashman (Oliver Reed) in those days rarely a count and completely unknown to Flashman. He never that this will change the course of European history! The irrepressible Flashman naps merrily and obliviously along.

In lesser hands, *Bay of Scars* might have been just another of the numerous costume films which are released each year. However in Lester's talented hands, all things become special. Ordinary scenes take on overtones of the comic and the surreal. For instance, in a scene which is mostly dialog between Flashman and a soldier, Lester chose the setting of a Turkish bath. Billowing steam greets us and

few moments that it is all we see. Then Flashman appears from beneath the steamy water, rising through the mist like a ghost.

Or take the fight Flashman has with Diamond's henchman—one of whom has a wonderfully inventive metal claw instead of a hand. It takes place in a kitchen and, accordingly, with all the clanging, hacking and throwing, a substantial amount of damage is done. A opened slice into a loaf of bread, a piece of hanging meat is cut, the bread is inadvertently sliced again, all during a furious battle where Flashman fights for his life. Yet as he escapes, his hand stops up—no sword, it's enough to make audiences applaud!

Though it may seem so, life is not all fun and games for Malcolm himself. "Don't it funny," recalls Lindsay Anderson, who has been McDowell's director many times, both in film and on the stage. "I tell you it's very strange—and it's not a strange case—I read Fraser's rather like to do films in which he gets subjected to horrible things because there is a masculine element in his writing. With Malcolm it is just the opposite. He's got such a dynamic cast of personality that he just gets into films where the character does a great deal."

Take Alex, for example. He drinks alcohol-Fizz, beats up his friends, rapes several women, commits a mob, is imprisoned, is subjected to the Ludovico Treatment, is almost murdered by music, is beaten cruelly and almost drowned.

Take Mick, for example in *O Lucky Man!* He is interrupted in a way, nearly blows up, set on fire, turned into a DNA experiment, is thrown through windows, and hunted relentlessly by mad scientists.

As Flashman, he is continually climbing up or down walls, imprisoned, wounded, trapped, tossed off bridges, nearly drowned several times and is fooled more than once. But, unrepentant, he rides it all out with such aplomb as to make it all seem easy.

"Mind you, I'm not complaining," Malcolm counters with a wide grin. "But I must admit to having had myself more than once during the course of filming. *Clockwork* was the worst, really. Having my eyes held open was murder, even though they kept putting drops in. I almost nearly drowned in the scene near

the end, and when I was better, after being released from prison, someone got too overzealous and broke several ribs. To top it off, I developed a blood clot that did not show up until several weeks later."

"But I truly enjoyed making *Bay of Scars*. Richard is such fun to work with and doing much of the action in Bombay, seeing the authentic houses and palaces was terrific." He laughs. "Gold but terrific."

The promise of *Bay of Scars* is quite simple and direct. After the insult to Ben Hur, and after Flashman has spent a delicious week with Lala Mexico, we move ahead six years, late, new costumes to Ludwig, the mad king of Bavaria, sends for Flashman. Money is involved and thus he opens to go. But it is all part of a plot hatched by the scheming Otto von Ben Hur, played by Alan Bates, a most unusual role for him, since it is neither easy nor difficult. The suggestion, as it has been in Lester's previous films with other actors and actresses, is that Bates wanted the opportunity to work with Lester.

The resulting complications are too numerous to go into and, in any event, one best left to be seen and not read about.

The photography, is lush and beautiful, making the most of the snow-covered Bavarian landscapes and the authentic interiors. In fact, every foot of *Bay of Scars* is a feast for the eyes.

Oliver Reed, dark and heavy, is properly menacing as the man who came on to us in *Germany*, and Brett Blund, as the Russian king, the worst Flashman is forced to envy, is a lily regal.

Bay of Scars then is one of those rarefied, a funny film, with both wit and slapstick, that is not tedious. And it is its intelligence which, in the end, makes it such a delight to watch.

Malcolm McDowell rises from the plush beige couch as the hotel waiter clears the table and wheels it out. He has proven to be just another human being, after all, charming and clever and friendly and, thoughtfully, without fear of clay. He gives his wife and in-laws, his girl, open and winning. "It's a great character," Malcolm confesses. "Because you know there's a good bit of Flashy in all of us."

MANY OUTRAGEOUS THINGS HAVE BEEN SAID ABOUT BARRY SMITH'S ART...



Barry Smith has travelled far beyond the realm of comic book illustration to bring you a new dimension in Fantasy Art. He has created an enigmatic world of haunting beauty, enchantment and evocative wonder—an atmosphere where good and evil intertwine, where reality and imagination become one; timeless, ethereal, unearthly—and he

calls it **THE DEVIL'S LAKE**. This exceptional work of art is new from Goblinway Press, Smith's own organization wherein each project is personally supervised from its inception through every stage of quality production to its final appearance. A number of GRP limited edition reproductions are now out of print, their resale value as high

as ten times their original price. The reproductions from Goblinway Press which have been issued as limited editions are personally hand-signed and numbered by Barry Smith in a manner identical to the finest art prints offered in galleries and museums. These are considered the *me plus ultra* among collectors and connoisseurs of Fantasy Art.

Smith's unique and wholly personal style—the imagery, vitality and intensity of expression always inherent in his art—has culminated in the creation of this stunning work, **THE DEVIL'S LAKE**. Superb full-size, full-color reproductions of the original painting are now available. Each piece is 23" x 25" and printed on fine quality matted finish paper.

An unsigned edition of **THE DEVIL'S LAKE** is available for \$5.00 plus .50 postage and handling, and comes matted in a protective tube. The deluxe, numbered and signed edition is available for a limited time only at \$12.00 plus \$1.35 postage, and is matted flat and insured to guarantee its arrival in pristine mint condition. Low numbers sell first.

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Bookmarks

Tuck a lovely lady into a book tonight! The Moon & Star Bookmarks represent one of Barry Smith's most unusual projects. Mat and frame them collectively or use them in your favorite comic novels. Two different sets of five, each 8" high on coated stock, a beautiful and striking barbarian woman brandishing sword and spear—set off by a red border, a long-haired, sword-wielding maiden dancing at midnight through Elysium—surrounded by a rich blue border, order by color, \$1.50 per set of five, order both sets and get them all for \$2.95. Includes .50 postage.

An exciting new book from Gorbliney Press, Shelf Stuff, here, for the first time, is a comprehensive collection of more than fifty drawings, sketches and paintings by Barry Smith. Within these pages will be found a fascinating assortment of previously unpublished material, from pencil layouts and figure studies to finished pen and ink drawings and final renderings of warriors, slave girls and demons. Twenty-four pages of heavy offset stock including one page of text and an index. Embossed leatherette cover, stamped in gold. \$4.50 plus .50 postage.

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 - ☐ G Shelf Stuff — Portfolio \$4.50 plus .50 post.
 - ☐ MEDIAScene issue 15 — with a Barry Smith exclusive, \$3.00

BARRY SMITH SPECTACULAR I & II
In issue 15, MEDIAScene featured the latest and most personal profile on Barry Smith yet published. In addition to a giant color center-spread by Smith, the Special Double issue also showcased a full cover reproduction of his Something Is Loose, and a preview of his new project, Robin Hood, \$6.95 \$3.00.

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THE FANTASY EPIC

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creating the graphic novel

The advertisements have been appearing in *fantasia* for months, ever since the July Comic Art Convention in New York City, where two books were announced to the public for the first time—"masterworks of stunning beauty and magnificent" they are called. And although the books, *The Flame Burns*, and *King of the Northern Alps*, have yet to appear, the superheroes might turn out to be accurate descriptions, considering the people involved in their production.

It's no secret that the work of Robert E. Howard is in triumphant revival now being republished in hardcover, paperback, and comic book format, or that his highly "visual" material has tempted interpretations from the top artists of the day—Mike Kaluta, Roy Knefel, Frank Frazetta, Barry Smith, Jeff Jones, and many more. This new work, then, can be expected to produce fireworks from another current master—Richard Corben, who will give us his insight into *King of the Northern Alps*, a Howard epic which has not been adapted into graphic form prior to

this attempt.

Corben himself is too recent to the field to be considered rediscovered, but the *EBT* story represents his first appearance in hardcover. The situation seems ripe to produce some unpredictable delights for the eyes, since there has to be a considerable liberating effect involved in preparing material not designed for the comic magazine page. (Yes, probably new restrictions are included as well, but even they will necessarily elapse.) Rich and Corben has shown by his black-and-white work, his color work, his posters, and his like *Bluesward* that variety of expression appeals to him. It should stimulate the prospective reader's appetite to anticipate what one part Howard, one part Corben, poured into book format and mixed well might produce. It's a cocktail we will soon be sipping.

The third party in the total creative effort is Gil Kane who is writing and drawing *The Flame Burns*, and editing both books. Kane has followed a long trail in learning the business of producing stories

in pictures. From his day as a teenager, excited over each new piece of work he was assigned, he rapidly and surely became fully professional in his work, and then more imaginative, stylish, and forward-looking as his work grew. His debut as editor came with *Blackmark*, a magazine in comic art, published by *Blackie*, in paperback for the mainstream (as opposed to special interest) audience. Currently being adapted to the black and white magazine format for *Marvel Comics*, *Blackmark* is unquestionably the precursor of Kane's current two books, dealing as it does with sword-and-sorcery matter. The heroics of the genre are to us artist like camp to a cat, and given the enthusiasm which *Blackmark* was greeted with, further steps in that artistic direction were inevitable. Thus, *The Flame Burns*, and thus, *EBT*. As for Kane, it can best be said that new, with his artistic and professional capacities meeting, he is still excited over each new piece of work he experiences.

Interviewed recently at his Connecticut home, Kane was articulate

and concerned about the success of his new venture and the overall significance for the comic art field of such a project.

"The hardcover book is a necessary shift of format from the small, pulp-textured very limited, comic book page to the full scope an expensive paper stock (and the way it 'breathes') color can provide." Kane, once started, doesn't need prompting.

"And the format is changed, as well as its physical appearance. Using text and pictures to further the story line is a conscious attempt to set a deliberate pace for the reader. Character and motivation give a story depth and fairness. Many plot lines in the current candy, disappointing quickly and providing 'empty calories' for the mind. Making substantial to hold on to. It is the character of Corben, for instance, that remains with us afterwards, not the series of actions in each episode of his saga. And establishing character, providing motivation, setting in atmosphere and tone—these are possible only at a slower pace than one uses to



leaf through a comic book."

Such a device was used in the E.C. line, it was remembered, but the answerer in this style was the late Charles Biro, whose Daredevil (and the Little Wise Guy) and Greenhorn and Crime Base Heri Pey raised the standards of comic book writing forevermore, requiring a higher caliber, more literary audience to succeed. His books did succeed, and began E.C. and Harvey Kurtzman and Al Feldstein. And they began the early Women magazines, and so forth, eventually leading to blackwork. Which makes one wonder which comes first, style or format. Does the physical appearance of the product require a certain style to fit it?

"No, just the reverse," continues Kane. "We decided on a fine art work and writing approach for these books. To arrive at the maturity and sophistication we aimed for, we had to prepare scripts with excellent visual elements tied together and slowed down by the prose. Artwork alone can't hold the reader to the pace at which he could fully appreciate the whole

effort. The best does that. For us, you see, the style determined the format."

There must be examples of work Kane himself admired, which supported his theory of pacing.

"Candidly Eisner's early work. And Bilo, and E.C., of course. And Little Orphan Annie, the earliest days. The strip just cracks me out, because Harold Gray, the producer of Annie, understood exactly how to get a moderate pace by the use of a great deal of text."

Apparently, others had counted on finding a redemptive to meet the requirements of their more literary efforts, and at least some of them did find an audience. Kane moved over where his audience would come from.

"The same people who supported E.C. The people we call fans, not the casual readers of comic books, but these who are involved in the field, who have some powers of involvement. The material will be challenging, making demands on the reader. He will have to be able to rise to that challenge or else the effort will be wasted. So a super-

vised level the books will not catch on. And the reader we are trying to reach is grossly oriented rather than graphics-oriented. The art will be there, and it will be the best, but it will be the writing that makes the capture. The visual element is what holds the eye, but only until the prose takes over and holds the mind."

"The answer is introspection," counters Kane. "Artwork of the kind we need can only be produced by an artist willing and able to delve within himself to find his own feeling, his own splicing which enriches his drawing. He art has the power of being part of his bloodstream. It comes right out of his veins and the reader will recognize that. The reader then provides his own linear vision to relate to the artwork."

It sounds like a very personal statement the artist is called upon to make, and the reader is called upon to respond to.

"Yes, but the intellectual point of view creates a unique result. Look at Carben's work, which exemplifies this style."

The interview was itself becoming interrelated, beginning to merge in on the personal efforts, the thousands of small victories and the equal number of setbacks as route to completion of the project, but there were still questions about the packaging and the economics of the two books. The price of each book is pegged at \$12.95.

It is the day of the \$10.95-plus comic book upon which according to a trend which has become noticeable in the past year or more, the answer would appear to be yes, at least as that would seem of first reading. To those of us whose memory must strongly flashes "12c" at the stimulus words "comic book", a hundred-fold increase is nearly unimaginable. But...

"I think so," says Kane, whose involvement in the comic art field as artist, writer, designer, editor, scripter, and publisher arrives here to some knowledgeable questions. "But certainly not for the same mass audience which publishers depend on now. No one expects the casual reader to spend such a

sum as the monthly comic books of today, especially since they are shrinking rapidly in every dimension."

It is easy to agree with Kane. The Origins of Marvel Comics at \$10.95 (hardcover) was a sensation. The Bernie Rogarth Tarnish (Wheaton, Guptill, \$9.95) went into second and third printings, and rumor has it that further installments are forthcoming. National Periodicals has a ten-dollar Origins on the schedule. There seems to be more reason to wait to build another shelf for these books. It will be filled in no time.

I reminded Gil Kane, as we served up the talk, that his fans who studied every comic book story he drew, and the people who had been enthralled by Blackhawk, were anxious to see the new production.

"Comic books never fully satisfied me as an artist," Kane concluded. "Did Blackhawk? That was just the new beginning!"

It was almost possible to see him standing high on some craggy hilltop, eye on the horizon. ☺

Phil Seuling



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THE SHADOW RETURNS!



STERANKO

valid, I patterned his escapes from traps on those found in *Indiana's* own notes. The Shadow was skilled in climbing cliffs or buildings in the fashion of a barn owl, but when he encountered a wall too sheer and smooth to allow finger grips or toe holds, I supplied him with a set of suction cups, like those used in "Walking Upside Down" beneath the dome of a theater, as described in my old syndicate article. He could set a howling *shibboleth* on a wall, making crooks think he was still around, only to find that he was gone when they surged to the attack.

I applied the techniques of stage illusions to the shadow

Often I applied the techniques of stage illusions to some of The Shadow's disappearances, disappearances spotted by his cloaked figure bulging from a curtain alone and riddled it with bullets. But when they scratched off the clock from the fallen form, it proved to be a skeleton that The Shadow had brought from a handy medical lab and left in place of himself. That scene was turned into the cover picture for an issue that became another instant, in another story. I stole the Shadow in a truck of huge truck tires outside of a garage, by throwing his automatic machine between the tires, he drove off a horde of gunmen whose own

shots failed to penetrate his impenetrable phlox. When finally saw that he was out of ammunition, the gunmen charged an ammo and a pile of crates into a rock of the top of the truck to the bottom, only to find that The Shadow again was gone.

I used that story on to Blackstone the magician, along with some appropriate suggestions. Before the scene was over, Blackstone was presented a stage illusion in which a girl crawled into a rock of white, easy to vanish when the first was rolled away and formed into an upright stick, from which the reappeared. Blackstone continued to perform the illusion as an outstanding feature of his show throughout his career as America's foremost magician.

When The Shadow was trapped under the learning gun muzzles of gloating, trigger-happy crooks, he managed to stay his execution momentarily by reaching his upturned hands with palms wide open. A thrust of his right hand, with a snap of his thumb and fingers—and a loud blast, accompanied by a vivid flash and a puff of smoke, wiped the lens from their evil faces. Stunned, the staggered would-be assassins reacted, with their gun pointing helplessly upward, while The Shadow, whipping a brace of .45 automatics from beneath his cloak, slugged his way through his stupefied throng, turning his tail from victim to victor.

Whenever The Shadow staged that caper, I would supply a footnote (typed by Maxwell Grant) stating that The Shadow used two highly potent chemical substances

to produce the blast—a potent, in fact, that to reveal their composition might prove disastrous. Today there are Shadow "buffs" who hark back to those days before they were born and wonder why such an impossibility was thrust upon them under the head of scientific fact. It may surprise them to learn that this startling effect was listed by magic dealers under the title of the "Devil's Whisker" and was guaranteed to make up any evidence when a magician walked on stage and snapped his fingers to prove that he was there.

It went off the market after a Chicago magic dealer demonstrated it for a customer, using several times the recommended amount. He lost his hand in the blast, which knocked both men unconscious. People arriving on the scene found the office so badly damaged that they thought a time bomb had exploded there.

the stories themselves underwent stages of development

The introduction of new characters and specialized devices was not a hurray job. Instead, it extended over many months and eventually ran into a dozen years. The stories themselves underwent gradual stages of development, all for the better, if judged in terms

of circulation, which eventually topped 200,000 per issue. The Shadow Club, composed of 50,000 active readers, demanded new surprises and stunning climaxes, and as time went on, plots were taken, lifting the novels that the club members liked best. Even the villains were to leave their share of everything on another in popularity. To appreciate this fully, we must look back to those early days when the Shadow went mostly and use what happened from there on.

When I delivered the very first Shadow story, it was assigned to John L. Hoar, one of the senior editors at Simon & Schuster. Steve John and I were both fresh in the field, our literary tastes were untrammelled by the stereotyped conventions that made so many pulp magazine stories read like warm-over. Naturally, we recognized the basic formula that the market demanded: the stories had to be direct, exciting and strong on action as well as surprise, but to inject one element of the expense of another was not only injurious to both, it could detract from the veracity of the story as well as its overall impact.

As a character, The Shadow was different, and so were his novels. They involved situations that violated some of the outworn pulp taboos and gave them a distinctive touch. John recognized this and went along with it to a marked degree, introducing editorial changes largely to keep a story within bounds, without disturbing its continuity. As he went over a story, he would mentally file away writing

sections or bit of dialogue that might have a bearing on the plot and link it up when the right time arrived. As a result, instead of this amounting an important item in a logging paragraph, he would stress it to improve it as the reader. If he had questions, they were quickly vital, which proved a tremendous help to authors whose novel-length stories were concerned.

I did all the shadow novels on a first draft basis

To keep up production, I did all the Shadow novels as a first-draft basis, re-hatched at the typewriter, with no rewrites if I could help it. I had gone beyond the chapter-by-chapter system and had only story fairly, though roughly, outlined before I began it, though there were some rather strictly sketches between the high spots. With 50,000 words as a guide, the stories had to be tighter and with The Shadow strongly developed as the lead character, the plots and devices had to be more elaborate if ingenious, to keep ahead of the regular readers, who expected The Shadow's next exploit to top all that had preceded it.

The constitution of The Return of The Shadow will appear soon in a future issue of *MEDIASCENE*. The adventures of The Shadow are currently available in paperback from Pyramid Books. ®

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THE MAD WORLD OF JACK DAVIS

After Herman Rockwell, Jack Davis is probably next in line as America's most popular artist. Over the past ten years, he's unapologetically done more movie posters, billboards, magazine covers, record jackets, advertising illustrations and editorial cartoons than any other of his contemporaries put together.

His work is characterized by clusters of celebrities, all unapologetically caricatured in the most exaggerated manner—yet leg out of jackets, tongues flap from open mouths, fingers are long, overly open-palmed. Fast match. A slow step that beautifully circles their way. The Davis trademark is almost always in evidence: a wild, zany, stampeding herd of humanity that

Davis delivers more than a fast jab. His numerous rewards from art directors' clubs attest to the quality of his work. It's both factors—speed and quality—that have facilitated his success.

"I'm always fighting a deadline," the 49-year-old artist confesses. "Especially since I've gotten into advertising work. Many of the people who give me assignments are old dead readers who consider my work. They call me when they have a crazy job with a lot of action or exaggeration. It's almost always about deadline stuff, most of the time having probably been used up trying to convince the client that a wild, funny approach wouldn't make his business collapse.

payment for six months (and having his car stolen), he was ready to leave his brushes into the Hudson River. Eventually he joined the staff of the New York Herald Tribune and liked the syndicated newspaper strip, *The Sinner*, for a year.

Finally, he was discovered by E.C. and spent the next half dozen years concentrating completely on comic books, before long he became one of the highest paid comic illustrators.

Visual people who "think with a pencil" can communicate an impression while "let a less for words." Davis is of this genre. Like many artists he deals in sensory impressions that often lack concrete verbal definition. He can "see" a

without knowing exactly what they want shown in the illustrations. Give Davis a pencil, scratch pad and a few moments and he'll have the answer. He is able to sit down with a script, read it, and start to rough out the complete story in layout sheets in a matter of minutes. The drawings are only a guide. Visual notes made from first impressions, they are nonetheless incisive and funny. The newspaper is always to let Davis look them right then and there, and start him on another story.

He prefers pen to brush, but first that the brush is a faster tool. He chose pencils in the job.

"I associate brush work with

will as pretending the picture's finished. A football player, for instance, runs through the windmills of opposing players to loose a giant lineman. This tells us where the player has been, what he's done, where he is now, and what might happen if the opposition gets him. This scene can be depicted in one illustration, combining both the implied future and past with the specific present.

"I exaggerate action in a drawing to clarify as much as to entertain," explains Davis. "When you push the action a little more in the direction it's already going, the reader becomes more aware of what's happening. For instance, in a western saloon brawl scene I'll



would surely transmute any other artist.

Davis himself is the epitome of his style: a 4'2" depicted, mis-matched gentleman who looks like a corporate attorney for General Motors after just being coached to mild manneredness by Jimmy Stewart. He can be found more often at podium or on a golf course than at the drawing board. With Davis, the name of the game is speed.

"If one of my drawings looks skidder than another," admits Davis, "it's only because I got what I wanted with less rendering or detail. I don't try to give my work a quick-draw look or to caricature looniness. That would be defeating the purpose of illustration. To work fast and direct, I give the drawing a chance to grow from an un-restricted beginning. Action drawing implies sudden movement, my approach, I think, should go the same way."

On numerous occasions Davis has caricatured full-color illustrations with many figures in less than a dozen hours, from picking the job up to delivery time. Again,



If it isn't a short deadline, I put it off until the last minute and make it a short deadline. I guess I just need the adrenaline. If the media doesn't ring and guys can't yell at me, I just kind of wonder off and throw the football around with the kids.

"My early drawing days were nothing special," remembers Davis. "They were like hundreds of other stories you've heard. I started out copying popular comic characters like Popeye and Harry. Later on I did some work for the high school annual in Atlanta, Georgia, where I was born and raised. And still later, while stationed in Queens, I drew a lot of comic book characters called 'The Bandwagon' I'd created for the *Many Moons*."

In 1945 Jack was discharged and entered the University of Georgia on the G.I. Bill. He drew for the college paper and humor magazine and during his sports career, worked on a sports strip for an Atlanta newspaper. Then an important assignment from the Coca-Cola company netted him enough money to buy a car and finance a trip to New York City. After pouring the



notion to the problem without necessarily being able to describe it.

Davis explains: "For an artist, drawing is always better than telling. A drawing can bridge miles, miles, even languages. For example, while in Saratoga with some of the pros from *Black*, we were called to address a schoolroom of kids. They didn't know our language just as we didn't know theirs. We stood in front of the room and they just looked at us, not knowing what to make of it all. So I picked up a piece of chalk and drew a picture of Mickey Mouse on the blackboard. I figured that night break the ice, but they just looked puzzled. The teacher did his best to explain to us that without TV and movies, the kids didn't know who Mickey Mouse was. So I quickly did a caricature of the teacher. The kids broke up. The picture talked their language even though we didn't."

The picture can also help establish communication in some where the language is the same. Art directors, working by intuition, often put together interesting concepts



concepts," offers Davis. "When I'm doing a job that needs a comic look—a 42 or 44 Winsor & Newton and a watercolor brush is my thing. My brush technique is a carryover from comic book days, and I can pencil and ink a three-page Superman episode in an hour. With a pen it might take me a whole day."

In his color work, he applies shades with colored ink or Green-leader solid watercolor with white mediums or perhaps with Prismacolor pencils. He utilizes the texture from the pencil in some passages, but dilutes it with clear water for others. Acrylics have been added to Davis' wide range of techniques and he doesn't hesitate to use any medium necessary. His comment when questioned about color markers: "I like 'em—they're fast," was no surprise.

A successful action drawing is more than an illustration depicting movement. There should be at least a hint of what's about to happen—or what couldn't or won't happen—as a result of the action. The implied conditional action adds drama and excitement to the scene as



make sure my figures have an exaggerated follow-through when throwing a punch. I'll show matter flying and legs popping off heads. I'll really demolish a chair over someone's head. It's funnier because it's baroque.

Even when drawing a figure in a rather quiet pose or sitting like a newscaster for TV (Davis) I exaggerate the pose. I draw the feet longer and cut off proportion with the rest of body, etc. Needless to say, I exaggerate the features, or would my caricature, I try to get the same mood this person usually gets when you see him, but with a slight touch."

Jack Davis does something else, too. He adds an appealing quality, a style, that brings his two-dimensional surfaces to life. He's a warm, sensitive man whose illustrations are created in delight, not effort. Mix this with his remarkable talent and you have a recipe for success. Just Thirpall.

A note of thanks to Nick Strupis, of *Mad Magazine*, for allowing us to dip generously into the heart of his book, *The Art of Numerous Illustrations*.@

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SECTION TWO

WRIGHTSON: Now we come to the age-old problem of a fatality versus a peasant trying to verbalize, digest his vaporization. It's damn near impossible. I have no idea what it is I want to be except that when I look at Steinbocker, I might not dance the way I want it to be, I can tell you. And even at that point, I could only tell you that it isn't right. Or not even that, I guess. It's just the way I would do it.

MIRACIEMI: How do you prefer to work on a story. Would you rather have a detailed plot or would you rather take the story idea out with the writer?

WRIGHTSON: I would rather talk about it with a writer. The way I see it, when I work, either he or I come up with the premise. While working on that premise, we start battling ideas back and forth. When we get a very basic storyline, something that can fit into a sentence, we start expanding on that. Until it reaches the point where it can sit down and break the story down into five acts.

MEDIA SCENE: How do you feel about violence in comics. Some of your stories contain violent elements, and since you commented earlier that you felt comics are essentially an entertainment media, do you find that violence is entertaining?

WEIGHTS. Action is interrupted
moment

INDISCREET: But there is a difference between action and violence: Jack Kirby is an action artist; in the pursuit comic-book sense, force-kings indicate innumerable panels where hero fists willent or live versa, but it doesn't matter how hard the people are hit or what they are hit with, no one really gets hurt. But if someone gets hit in a Bernie Winstone story, especially in the latter stories, normally their brother is dashed out on the floor. Now, I'm not comparing you to Sam Peckinpah, but there is a difference between your graphics on violence and Kirby's graphics on action.

VISIONARY: By his definition, the stories are violent. But in the horror stories that I draw, the characters portray me closer to real people than Kirby's. Or much of the Marvel stuff. A lot of the Marvel books feature superheroes, which means that the guy throwing the punch is super strong in the first place and the guy on the receiving end, just as importantly, is also super strong. He can take it. It's like two brick walls hitting each other. All it amounts to is a lot of swinging and punching and flashing lights and force lines. I prefer cause-and-effect. I prefer every action to have an equal and opposite reaction, which is I guess how you see over the head years brains fall out on the floor. And you die. By bleeding to death.

MIDNASCENE: I didn't mean the question of condemnation. I'm not known, myself, as the most non-violent writer in America.

WRIGHTSON: I didn't take it with condemnation. Action and violence is such a hard damn thing to define. Trying to look at my work objectively, I wouldn't think I'm overly violent. I think it has a lot of mood. I think our violence that

happens is verifiably untrue.

MEDIA SCENE: Well, violence isn't to be ignored since it is such an integral part of our society. But getting onto a more pleasant subject, how do you feel about sex in comics?

INSIGHT: Cinema as they stand now are so senseless. They aren't geared toward sex. They're geared toward action. A lot of running around, leaping, fighting.

MEDIA SCENE: Do you mean to say you've never done a story that has sexual overtones or undertones?

WEIGHTON: Of course I have. But like I said, the whole system is built around such a useless notion of world. I don't think about finding some sex, like a story. Anything that does get in is probably subliminal and I'm not aware of it already. That's very Freudian. I think the industry as it stands would have difficulty interpreting sex and make it work. And make it tasteful. Sure, you can do a sex comic book for the sake of doing a sex comic book.

MEDIASCENE: What I was referring to was that a story might have some sexual elements in it, psychologically or physiologically. It doesn't have to be an entire storyline devoted to two people screwing their brains out in a reacher-infested bathroom, the kind of stuff done often times in the undergrounds. But as honest relations ship-between-a-man-and-a-woman.

I consider myself an entertainer.

or any honest relationship between
two people.

WRIGHT: Somehow, when it happens in a comic book I can't believe it. Everything else that is happening in there is so fantastic, and so utterly unbelievable—though you have to understand that you are presented with an unbelievable premise and you have to accept it in order to read the story—that it becomes difficult to accept relationships between men and women in comics. It's like too much reality in an unreal world.

ANDREA SECH ME: I've noticed that in much of your work, most of the women that appear in these stories have a sultry sensuality. The clothing clings and in all looks soft and alluring. Almost a non-artificial sexuality about these women. They

WRIGHTSON: Oh, sure. I deal, more or less, with real characters. I try to make the women real.

MEGASCENE: But your headlines don't tend to be as plain as the average woman.

WRIGHTSON: I know it. It's a super sex routine. I have to admit to overdoing it on awful lot. And there's really no excuse. It's shameful. But there it is and, okay, I'll shoot myself.

MEDIA/SCIENCE: What do you hope to accomplish in this medium? Or elsewhere?

WRIGHTSON: I pretty much consider myself an entertainer, just like an actor or any sort of performer, and that's basically all I



went to achieve in comics.

MEADSCENE: You're working on several projects outside the major comic book companies? What are they? And do you think you'll work toward more of these projects in the future?

WRIGHTSON: The project you're talking about is *Frankenstein*. Some people in France are starting comic book adaptations of classic novels. They will be published in hardback. They have never done comics before, but they think comics are very exciting as a storytelling medium. Which they are. I've seen one edition that's already done. *Treasure Island*. It's just gorgeous. Beautiful reproductions.

I've always wanted to do frankenstein

I've wanted to do *Frankenstein* since I was a kid. I saw the movie and then read the book and decided I wanted to draw it. And I'm finally getting the chance to do it. It's not only hardback but it will be in full color. It will be 66-pages long, which is just about the right length.

MEADSCENE: When you're working on singular projects, posters and such, do you approach it with a different attitude than when you are telling a story in a comic book?

WRIGHTSON: No, no. If all I've got to work with is one picture I'd try to tell a story in that one pic-

ture. I'd try to arrange the elements in a very clear way.

MEADSCENE: Do you like the movie or the novel version of the monster?

WRIGHTSON: I'm torn between the two. I really wouldn't know which I preferred.

MEADSCENE: What also are you working on besides the *Frankenstein* project?

WRIGHTSON: I've involved in doing a portfolio of illustrations from Edgar Allan Poe stories.

MEADSCENE: Are you a Poe fan?

WRIGHTSON: Yes, I always have been. Poe's stories are some of my earliest reading.

MEADSCENE: This goes back to your preoccupation with horror material. Poe, *Frankenstein*, the E.C.s.

WRIGHTSON: I blamed that on the E.C.s but I guess it goes back farther than that, and it is a fascination I have for the horror genre. I'm sure the E.C.s helped feed it.

MEADSCENE: Did you like the recent movie, *The Execution*?

WRIGHTSON: It was alright, but not about scary movies. I recently saw *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. It is undoubtedly the most frightening movie I have ever seen. I got it twice because the first time I saw it I couldn't believe it was that scary. I thought, "I'm having a bad day. What I had for breakfast didn't agree with me. And I'm seeing this movie on top of it and it's having a bad effect on me." So I went to see it a second time. I feed my fears. It scared the hell out of me. I don't think I ever want to see it again.

MEADSCENE: And how do scary rabbits fit into this world? Not the one of the Chain Saw Massacre but the one you drew.

WRIGHTSON: Good question. I'm not sure I have an answer for it, but I like it. Just like I like *Rage*, *Shogun*, *Countdown* before and after *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* might have helped. I like cartoons, I like schlocky thrills movies. I also like really horrendous horror movies.

MEADSCENE: Let's get back to the Poe material. How do you decide which scene from a Poe story you are going to illustrate for a poster?

I survive on one page every two weeks

WRIGHTSON: The first thing that hits you with a Poe story is the pencil. The really gruesome bits. Originally, I'd planned not to do the sensationalistic bits and do what anybody else could really do, which is the complete line of the story or the really gruesome scene. I'm going to pick something else out of the story and illustrate that. So I did that and came up with some of the most incredibly dull stuff you've ever seen. I can't say anything happens in a Poe story except for the gruesome bit because that's certainly not true, but it will take a better time than me to draw it, so I ended up doing the classic scenes. I've got the last scene from "The Telltale Heart." The last

scene of "The Cask of Amontillado" where the character puts the last brick in the wall. The scene where the cat is ready to set the cat's eyes out in "The Black Cat" will be in the portfolio. The sequences leaping into the room from "Murders in the Rue Morgue" is another.

MEADSCENE: How do you decide what to do with the scenes? I mean, I've got a lot of problems with Murray Bennett. He was constantly asking me to redraw things, things that I can't remember, but things that seemed very minor, and I was very irritated. I don't run into that problem much anymore. I don't know if it's that I realize that much writing in the industry or if I've confirmed. Probably a combination of both.

MEADSCENE: Do you want to do another series again?

WRIGHTSON: I enjoyed Swamp Thing. But it kind of got to me, doing it over and over again. I had nothing to look forward to but the same character. Or characters, every month.

MEADSCENE: How much work do you like to do? A book every two months.

WRIGHTSON: That sounds about right. More likely, considerably less than that.

MEADSCENE: Can you survive?

WRIGHTSON: Oh yeah! I can survive on one page every two weeks. I need a lot of money to survive.

MEADSCENE: Do you still enjoy comics?

WRIGHTSON: They seem dull now,

Maybe I've just lost that sense of wonder.

MEADSCENE: I noticed that once I began working professionally in comics that some of that sense of wonder did vanish. You became involved in the technical and negative areas of comics, not that they are both synonymous, but when you are doing it stuff loses a distance or trying to achieve the dream of breaking in, comics have sort of a dream quality about them. You're unaware of how demanding it is to turn out a series. And I can see what you mean about Swamp Thing: even though you enjoyed working on it, the characters became like shadows lurking over your shoulders.

maybe I've lost that sense of wonder

WRIGHTSON: Swamp Thing was a bit like that. Though it was nice that readers like the kits that I wasn't satisfied with.

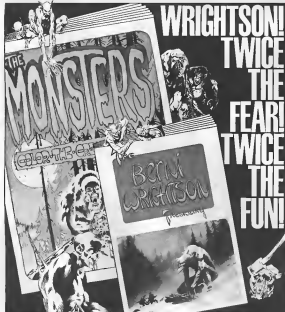
MEADSCENE: Is there any last subject you'd like to speak on before we finish this series?

WRIGHTSON: No really, I'm not a terribly big talker.

MEADSCENE: They're not what *Star Trek* told me. He said you could talk and talk.

WRIGHTSON: Ah, what does *Star Trek* know?

MEADSCENE: We'll have to ask him some time. ☺



few artists in the past decade have captured the imagination of the comic buying reader and amassed an impressive following of admirers like Ben Wrightson. Beginning with his early work in fan magazines in the late 1960's, Wrightson has steadily grown as an artist, steadily pushing his complex line technique and unique approach to storytelling. Almost single-handedly he has brought back the unforgettable MONSTER TRADITION of the E.C. era with his own special brand of whimsy using a series of fine lines like a sculptor would use a chisel on oilcloth and often unexpected use of black shadows (something is inevitably lurking in them) and as weird a collection of characterizations to be found this side of Rorschach. Poe or Roger Corman. Two new books have just been published featuring the features art of Ben Wrightson. **MONSTERS** is a colossal 11" x 17" volume, the size of which gives ample warning to the scope of the horror within. Subtitled as the "Color-the-Creature Book," **MONSTERS** is really a handsome, quality printed portfolio of the gruesome and the grotesque. Each page reproduces a fantastic single illustration conjured up by Wrightson's entrenched brain—a Vampire, Ghoul, Ghast, Mummy, Mannequin, Alien, Cyborg, Frankenstein, Plant Monster, Zombie, Golem, Crippling Dwarf, Rex Mardner, Witch and Swamp Creature. Each roosting reader is accompanied by an equally revealing and draft rhyme by the irrepressible Phil Seuling. **MONSTERS**

is bound by full-color glossy covers and is available for \$4.00 plus 50 postage. The **BRIEF WRIGHTSON TREASURY** is the definitive book on the artist and his work: a 30-page volume bound beneath full-color glossy covers. Actively three books in one, the first section of the **TREASURY** is devoted to a largely interview in which Wrightson discusses his past, present and future, his achievements, his failures and his philosophy toward art. Section two is a comprehensive collection of illustrations culled from the earliest fanzines right up to the present, and includes drawings rendered in pencil, ink, wash and mechanical tone. Part three runs a complete story reprinted from *Web of Horror* in addition to three rare Unpublished pages. A collector's edition for \$5.50 plus 30 postage.

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Apparently not even the comics industry is safe from the endless attack of shark fever being brought on by the \$100 million hit, *Jaws*. Charlton Comics is negotiating to acquire the rights to this block-buster movie, with plans to issue one-shot editions in both color and black-and-white magazine formats. If and when they get the property, Mike Curt will script both adaptations, with Joe Staton illustrating the color story, and John Byrne handling the b/w. Just how both books will present the same

negative, faster. Then again, if the *Jaws* audience consists of tens of millions of \$4.00 ticketbuyers, surely the comics can make off a hundred-thousand of the two-bit variety. Such thinking is obviously behind Marvel's giant Treasury-sized editions of *DC* and 2001, and the plans for sequels indicates that their comic filigree may even surpass the films.

As for the specific progress of film *Se7en*, the Jack Killy written and drawn 2001 has been completed, and is being inked by Frank



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adaptation without appearing ineffectual is being worked out now, but the primary concern is to get on the "biggest movie ever" bandwagon with it's still hot.

Charlton has long had an interest in TV and movie tie-in comics (Donna-Dorothy cartoons, *Princess The Funtastic Family*, etc.), but the action-adventure field has generally eluded them. Now, with *Jaws* and *Speed* 1998, they may succeed in rearing the film brand, which has careerless longevity since the 1970s. *Emergency*, *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *Star Trek* are also due to appear from Charlton soon, in both color and black and white, featuring art from the Neal Adams/Dick Giordano studio.

Bill Pearson, vice publisher of *Wonder*, is new as assistant editor at Charlton, and has stated that the company is looking rather heavily on those, and future movie deals, with plans to rush Jews into production to generate the maximum amount of publicity.

the high price of success

Success or failure for those books, and Marvel's future like *Se7en*, are very uncertain at this time. However, primarily because the cost of adaptation rights from hundreds to thousands of dollars must be added to the art, writing, paper, ink, printing, shipping and distributing. The fact that people may have forgotten about the film by the time the comic can be produced is also a powerful, yet seemingly



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negative. *Se7en* and John Verporten. The special effects in the film sequence are being copied by Jack personally, to sell the entire book into what he refers to as his "nostalgia." Work is already underway on the second book in this \$1.50-sized quarterly series, continuing the adventures beyond 2001 in a quasi adaption titled "Orion Seed."

Issue 1 of 2001 could go on sale

by early January, but since that happens to be a low sales period, the book is being held back until the annual summer sales begin in July. Also appearing at approximately the same time will be a \$1.50-sized edition of *Capitane America*, featuring all new material, written and drawn by Kirby. As with the regular comic, the super-specialized DC will have a \$1-centennial theme, only this time



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will be appropriate for the monthly storyline.

Kirby is also hard at work on a brand-new project that is still under wraps, but involves a new variation on his famous *Gods* theme. Don't be too surprised if the word "Gods" appears in the title when the concept is ready for release. This entire project is currently two years even to Marvel staffers, but sources reveal that it concerns a group of broad-based heroes, loosely connected to the Marvel Universe, who may, ultimately, resolve Jack's *New Gods* Trilogy began at DC.

The *Wonder* of *Oz* book will have two first issues as a result of the Marvel-DC merger on the initial movie adaptation. DC has apparently passed up the option to continue the quarterly series in collaboration, as Marvel must continue alone, and begin numbering again due to legal technicalities. As a result, the books 2 and 3 will be renumbered 1 and 2, in addition to the Marvel-

DC 0x 1.

In any case, the second *Oz* book (numbered 1) will contain an adaptation of L. Frank Baum's book of *Oz*, starring the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman. A two-volume like here is the title character in the next book adaptation, *Gone with the Wind*, with a short piece in production following, ending sales return as the first two (first) issues. Ray Thomas has plans to continue the series with *Danbury* and the *Wonder* of *Oz*, but will wait his over 100-page per month writing commitment with new books and established series until he gets the go ahead.

Although Alcala is illustrating all the *Oz* books for the time being, because, according to Ray, "he captures the flavor and style of both the *Oz* material and the 1930's period in which the novel adapts. He's simply perfect for the book. He also captures the appearance of the MGM characters a bit better than the first book did, so that at least our investment in film royalties is being covered."

Production on the massive *Superman* vs *Spider-Man* project is nearing completion, with the subject of release dates now being considered. To be in time for the Christmas season, the book must go on sale



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by November, but the schedule for such a move is almost prohibitively tight at this time. Sales during the winter months are also a major factor, since they are traditionally low. Stan, Carmine and their co-creators and advisers are debating whether or not to rely on the drawing power of the two super-stories with a January release, or to wait for the already proven sales increase that summer brings.

As an interesting insight into the relations between Marvel and *Wonder* on this project, plans were fully underway to produce the book with a different cover for each company. The problems of whose name was to come first on the cover was at the root of the matter, plus each company's policy to appear to be in charge. Unfortunately, both Marvel and DC's individualism was crushed on September 22, when their lawyers informed them that they could print each cover in different colors, but

COMIXSCENE

they connect tanger with the essential elements upon the book cover. Final resolution: the title will read *Superman: First and Last*, with *Spider-Man* second as all books.

Gerry Conway, Ross Andru and Rick Diemond are the writer, artist and inker for this six-to-eight, \$2.00 project, but just who gets the original artwork is an interesting question, in light of the book's historic importance. Under the Marvel system, Andru would receive 75-80% of the pages, Diemond 15-20% and Conway 5-10%. Marvel's policy has generally been to put the art into a bonded warehouse, where it is lost, forgotten, destroyed, stolen, or maybe someday returned. Andru, as a Marvel artist, should

"Country of the Kells" featuring Francis X. Gordon, into an Arabian Nights-type tale starring Conan titled "Abode of the Damned."

In the regular Conan color comic, Steve Galt will take over as the inker for John Buscema's pencils, while Conan begins his "Queen of the Black Coast" saga in earnest. Immediately after presenting the origin of Belt, the lady pirate, Roy will embark upon a tale that explores how the Cimmerian acquired the nickname of Juma, the Lion. In all, Thomas plans to spend the next year or so on the comic phase of the barbarian's career, and promises a few surprises along the way, especially since John Buscema has expressed no interest in



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being drawn in suchlike Conan, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four and Avengers guests, with the attraction featuring an all-starred art. As a place of nostalgic sales incentive, Kirby may be called upon to illustrate an FF Giant, with Roy Thomas writing, providing certain contractual difficulties can be ironed out between them.

Even more nostalgic is Thomas' revival of the 40's superheroes in *The Invaders*, now to be joined by *The Liberty Legion* in a four-part story that is equally divided between *Invaders* 2 and 6, and *Marvel Premier* 29 and 30. *The Liberty Legion* consists of The Fix, Red Raven, Whizzer, Tiger Man, Blue Diamond, Blue America, The Patriot

and linking the strip, he will also be involved in designing the essential plot lines as often as possible, allowing Roy to spend his time more economically in depicting the convoluted pages.

Previously announced, but not-yet-printed projects are also due to appear soon, including an adaptation of Philip Wylie's *Gladiator*, drawn by Rich Buckler, and another chapter of the *Masterblade* from Peter Snerd, illustrated by Alex Malt. Both stories may turn up as one-shot comic issues if the book and weekly magazines continue to decline.

As virtually the sole survivors of the monster/horror genre, *Demals* and *Wormworld* by Night are heading



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get his work back, Conway as a National writer probably won't get any, and Diemond can act on referral as a more or less neutral contributor. What eventually happens should prove interesting. Also, virtually no mention has been made of the fact that both Marvel and National are investing extra-big money into extra-big books with (in this case at least) almost assuredly proportionately extra-big profits, while paying the same old small comic book wages.

Despite the blurbish blurb to the contrary, *The Savage Sword* of



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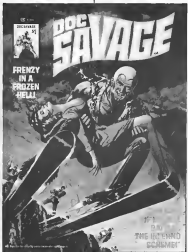
glittering a few of the stories he is drawing.

The debauched Kull, the Breyner returns in his color comic guise, continuing the original character as though nothing had ever happened. This is a result of the character's magazine incarnation, which sold fairly well, but was said when *penic* gripped the book's as a result of last winter's sales slump. In fact, the only sales figures available even now, are in many ways incomplete and inconclusive. Roy and Ed Neumeier are handling Kull's return with *Thelma* Bont, turning up again and again and again, by virtue of his villainy and his goodperry.

Roy will also be resurrecting the *Waltman* scripping chores for *Red Sledge*, virtually monopolizing Marvel's *Howard* adaptations.

In the superhero field, Thomas is planning to coordinate an adventure between the *Fantastic Four* and *Marvel Two-In-One* as he takes over editorial control and Ben Grimm loses his thingy other-aps for two or three months. To handle this disconcerting turn of events, Grimm has an artificial thumb constructed, and battles the Hulk some more time.

There are plans underway at Marvel for a rejuvenation of the all-original *Shogun* comic format, now that sales figures for last year's books are available. It seems as though the initial fever for the *Shogun* line was concentrated in the horror field, just as the bottom fell out of the market. As time passed, the horror figures pulled



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down other averages, while paper and economic problems caused a premature abortion of the giant-sized comic project. Now that the true picture is available, plans are

and Jack Frost, all called together by Bucky. Kid Bakker and Dick Jones are the fortunate artists who get to tackle all these and a half heroes and their foes. Don Heck and Vinny Colletto are really the lucky ones though, they get to assemble and unassemble all these red, yellow and blue costumes when the two superhero groups lack in battle morale.

In the area of new projects, Thomas is working on several new ideas, including an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's *Sungle Book*. This project is inspired by the feature film starring Sabu, not the cartoon from Bizarro, and will start off with the origin of Mowgli and his battle for Shere Khan, the Bengal tiger that killed his father.

Next, Roy and Buscema team-up to bring back *The Black Knight*, in the guise of King Arthur, Buscema's enthusiasm for the series is at a remarkable high, and besides penning



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continuously along the book alloys of comedies. With the threat of cancellations always menacing, they are being studied for methods of improvement, and will both be moving steadily toward firing up connections with the established Marvel Universe. This becomes particularly evident in *Breathless*, as Roy Wolkman brings the Prince of Darkness back to life, plunges him into two Night Stalker-type tales, then introduces Doctor Strange into the storyline. Using the Master of the Mystic Arts as an excuse to kick off another one of his massive comic-novels, Wolkman promptly kills both Strange and his servant Wang, only to resurrect him later in the Doctor's own book, leaving the Count free to pursue his epic destiny. Berni Wrightson gives *Breathless* a suitably macabre cover to commemorate the event.

Things are only slightly less hectic in *Daredevil*, as Wolkman takes over to create leaves in the form of a new villain with an old name, Bullseye. He also reveals how, sometime in the past 30 years, the CIA assassinated a US president and replaced him with a stooge, plus the explanation as to how John and Rachel's kid, Matt, was saved by the Viet Nam war was a beast that never really occurred. Extra-plot US Dollar quest starts!

Keeping the same pace, Marv is also working with John Buscema on a science-fiction inspired superhero known as *Black Nova*, in addition to another superhero who is a genuine clown-horned satyr, known

savage sword sched sheathed

Conan blow magazine is not as a monthly schedule yet. A general cutback in the line has negated those plans for a while, giving Roy a chance to write something other than Howard-inspired sword and secrecy.

In any case, for issue 10 of *Savage Sword*, Roy promises to wind-up the sprawling saga of Conan the Conqueror in a final 50-page installment. John Buscema and the tribe will handle the art in place of Gil Kane, who is currently committed to his own *Horizon* book project for Morning Star Press.

Savage Sword 11 will feature another 50-page comic novel, this time co-writing Robert E. Howard's

NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

as Head-God.

A number of older heroes are getting their big chance at one-shot titles next spring, in the hopes that they are strong enough to survive on the comic battlefield. Night Hawk, Valkyrie, The Vision, Scarlet Witch, Angel, Iceman, The Screamers and Blue Swans are already scheduled, as well as a Jim Starlin/Howie Chaykin collaboration on the return of Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Moving from the sublime to the ridiculous, Howard the Duck makes his debut in October with a barboric storyline, guest-starring Spider-Man. Issue 2 will feature the Quacky Space Turb, and number 3 will contain The Master of Quack Fa.



Howard is not alone in his comical crime-fighting crusade; however, since Marvel is soon to unveil the true-life adventures of San Diego's resident costumed crime-fighter, Captain Sticky Bob (Moss) Foster is developing Captain Sticky into a color comic project, now that his Crazy career has reached its conclusion in issue 17. Just what direction Sticky will take (other than humorous) is still unknown, but Foster is reportedly interviewing the Captain's wife, her for real, and will begin submitting ideas soon.

Bob Tringale has decided that he has had enough of his green-skinned red gothos for a while, and has named The Hulk over to Sol Buscuma so that he can switch over to Iron Man and Super-Villain Team-Up. The most striking result of this artistic turnover will be the redefinition of the irascible new of Iron Man's red and yellow metallic visage.

To go along with his new revamp look, Mr. W will be moving into a number of new faces, and some old enemies to new outfits. The Freak and The Living Arsenal are just two of the newer characters, and both the Crimson Dynamo and the Man-Dead's reappearance in refurbished forms. Len Wein will be scripting the stories, and among his first observations, Iron Man will re-design his costume so that putting it on and out of it will be less of a hassle.

Len is also building The Hulk up to his imminent 20th anniversary issue with a pair of declassified

books, first against The Abomination, and then the Man-Thing. Jim Starlin will draw all of the Man-Thing issues, which has a Tami Wrightson cover, leading into issue 19's encounter with S.H.I.E.L.D. without Nick Fury. For the 20th issue, the main feature will be the resolution of Ultron's Father's venerable problem, the first development of a Hulk Barbarian storyline, and the return of Jarella.

Moving on to Spider-Man, Len and Sol Buscuma will be bringing back the Sandman, Dr. Octopus, the Punisher, Tigra and the Spider-robots, as well as a whodunit story that crosses over into Berserk without the berserk-ness over appearing in the actual story.



Finally, the long-overlooked marriage of Betty Ross and Med Leeds takes place in the first Marvel crossover. Marvel's adventure is also on Master's agenda as Thor becomes embroiled in a four-part adventure with the Time Twisters, followed by a two-part Ironclad sequence that regularly ties into the Black-tempered with its theme of redemption in Asgard. As an offshoot of the Thor series, and crossing over with the January issue of The Thunderbolt's title, Warriors Three will chronicle the adventures of Hogan, Fandral and Valkyrie when they take off for a night on the town. Len and John Buscuma will produce this one-shot mini-series that shows a humorous look of a trio of Asgardians who have Ragnarok without fear, but are somewhat of a less when it comes to the patched ladies of New York City.

The majority of Marvel's new ideas are being channeled through



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for future publication on. Meanwhile, the superhero who debated in Silvercliff by Night, a sci-fi superhero strip being developed by Howie Chaykin and Ward World, a talkative fantasy series written by Doug Moench and drawn by Mike Ploog, starting an epic, multi-volume character known as Tyndal of Kien.

Don McGregor will be starting up another serialized novel in comic form, starting the Black Panther in Jungle Action 19, as the Wakanda Prince travels to the US and takes on the Grand Dragon of the KKK. Titled "Blood and Sacrifice," the story has T'Challa investigating the murder/suicide of Monica's sister, Billy Graham and Bob McCleod

but also explains why the Mertians are so ill-fated determined to destroy Kibben and his friends, and if anyone that their needs. Kibben, McGregor is meaning a letter-writing campaign, because this is one title on the endangered species list.

A recent addition to the McGregor work quota is the new monthly adventures of Luke Cage. Here for Mr. With issue 30, a footbath villain named Pinhead Jones is introduced, and becomes a menace because he can chew his way through Cage's hide. The story also contains a thoroughly disgusting couchroom scene that serves as character development to one of Cage's old acquaintances.



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illustrate this series of tales, all of which join to form a genuine mystery, complete with clues.

Jungle Action 20, which has the Panther tied to a cross and set on fire for a climax, introduces Monica's parents says after the African chief runs into trouble trying to buy some from the back of the sugar market. JA 21 continues the tale of the Panther's infiltration of the KKK, and features a spectacular double-page spread. Future stories will concentrate on the Panther's adventures in the Reconstruction Era immediately after the Civil War, but Don won't tell how the 100-year time jump takes place.

Killraven 34 winds up its long series of tales concerning Sheer in the story "A Death in the Family." Craig Russell took four months to draw the 17-page tale, which kills off two of the Freezes, reveals the origin of Srok, and develops the relationship between Canale and M'Shula.

Issue 35 continues one of Don's darkest and most perverse stories, titled "The 20-Year Men," and is about a Georgia native who is the son of his race, and must mate before his life runs out at the age of 24 hours. The bizarre story is full of symbolic images and allegories, and must surely stand as one of the most unusual Marvel tales ever.

Killraven 34 takes place in the Ooze/Green Swamp, and not only introduces a new character (Drover Piv), the caterpillar-woman,



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"Over the Years they Harbored the Stars" is the title of the story in Luke Cage 31, and it concludes the Pinhead/couchroom trilogy of tales. New dangers arise at the end, however, as Nash Burton runs into trouble from his past, and Cage almost saves Manhattan from lung cancer.

Marvel's expansion into the black and white magazine market is going to continue to be severely restricted in the coming months, as the shelves of the Marvel Preview, including its quarterly subseries, and new proposals are submitted.

power-packed premier pair

to the closest scrutiny in light of last year's failures. In Preview, two issues of The Storms will be followed by two installments of Doug Moench and Val Meyers' She-Hulk. Future plans include a new thing from more horror to new super-heroic concepts, and a bi-monthly schedule is being contemplated to present more ideas on so accelerated timetable.

And finally, even though his line of the Brights of Marvel Comics has only been on sale a matter of weeks, Don is already preparing to compile the third volume of his series. This time however, the Marvel villains are in the spotlight, and the focus will be on their most



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NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

catenally dead, their first appearances, and their never-ending supply of ulterior motives.

At National, various photo-ops, conventions and restaurants are taking place daily. Paul Levitz, Allen Asherman and two production people have been laid-off; almost every book has been cut back or cancelled; and Joe Kubert has relinquished nearly all his editorial duties.

For Kubert, the loss of non-drawing commitments is being compensated for by new ideas and more time at the board. Joe Orlando is taking over as editor of both *Tarzan* and *Knight*, which have always been plagued by high royalty costs (especially as much as \$1000 per page by DC) as Kubert

writer, page counts and enthusiasm. As it is, DC's \$1.00 size format may soon be cutting pages in order to maintain equality with economic reality.

Joe is also helping to develop a number of other new projects, created in the more affluent 40s tradition by two comic writers: Sub Kanigher. Acknowledged by Kubert as "one of the most talented pages I know," Kanigher's track record contains innumerable successes through the 50's and 60's, and includes the creation of such diverse characters as Sgt. Rock, Swampy, Ace, Viking Prince, The Sea Hawk, The Hunted Task and The Legion (both new and when they were originally winners). Tense, imaginative and infused with zip



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being better. A high voltage monster attempt succeeds in killing all but Iron Man. Rising from the canteen, he declares he now has extra power of speed, strength and agility, and elects to take up the crusade against crime with the comely descriptive name of gamma. The Justice.

National has a number of other new book proposals in their files, but expansion will have to wait until the latest crop of titles prove themselves on the newsstand. For now, the new books, including *Black Star*, *Green Lantern*, *Green Arrow*, *Starline*, *All-Star*, *Plastic Man*, *Knight Rider*, *Star Wars*, all of Gerry Conway's entries, *Blackhawk*, *Mercury*, and virtually most other releases this year, are being limited

in recent history. National declined to purchase the comic book rights to the live Saturday morning show, leaving Marvel with open for the sale. By the way, there's a new actor playing Captain Marvel on the Shazam TV show, but it seems to take a five-year-old mind to be able to watch long enough to tell.

Gold Key comics will be getting a new editorial director soon in the person of Bill Spicer, as Craig Cruse takes his retirement after many years of service. Presumably, Spicer will be heading off the West Coast adventure titles, after having lettered many Gold Key comics for the last few years.

Meanwhile, Star Wars is expanding. Gold Key's adventure line almost single-handedly, his latest efforts



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will undoubtedly continue creating the covers for *Tarzan*, much as he does for *Sgt. Rock*, and fans need not worry about imminent cancellation in the Apennine's future because, according to a high National source, "*Tarzan* is too important a property to let die. We'll probably run it at least if we have to," putting it in the same category with *Wonder Woman*, *Shazam*, and a few other unbreakably important but reportedly financially bankrupt characters.

Before he turns over the editorial reins, Kubert has at least three more *Tarzan* tales in the can, two of which are adaptations of Burroughs' last novellas, "*Tarzan and the Champion*" and "*Tarzan and the Jungle Murders*." Joe's last contribution to the apennine chronicles will be an original tale entitled "*The Diamond Slave*."

Also resulting from Kubert's shifting of power will be the introduction of Philippine art over Jay Layport in the traditionally important *Sgt. Rock*. And the new project, *Wondering*, edited by Jay, written by Kanigher, drawn by Ric Estrada, will suspend publication after three issues to begin the long agonizing wait for sales figures.

The majority of Kubert's comic commitments in the future will be devoted to the completion of the Old Testament of the Bible, in collaboration with Moshe Mendelsohn. This project will ultimately consist of 10 to 15 volumes, and take 5 to 6 years to produce, depending on



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basics and mystic subjects. Kanigher's writing has almost always been dynamic and forceful, while performing the difficult function of selling comics. Perhaps the most important thing to his credit though, is the fact that many of today's young comic writers readily admit that Kanigher was a great influence on their formative careers, and has made them actively relooked due to the flamboyant enormity of the Marvel Age.

For the summer of '76, Kanigher is concluding his career as an exotic exotic creator and storyteller with a trio of new tales that include a woman's life version of the Blackhawk, a cops and robbers strip called a *Blackhawk*, and an offbeat superhero tale called *The Justice*.

Sweetness referred to as the "*Justice*" is an ad-lib from Vietnam novelist Barry Borge, who conceived a *Justice* like existence soon after his Irish



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man father finds a mattress stuffed with a million dollars. When gangsters come to reclaim the fortune, Borge saves his father, a stranger, a boxer and an arabian in the en-



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to three or six-issue first runs. When the first couple issues of any book usually sell poorly, most will probably never see print again.

Another list of books is reportedly being prepared for cancellation, including *Tar*, *Resolute*, *Kang*, *Black Ranger*, *The Avengers*, *First Issue Special* and *Wonder*. Captain Marvel's Shazam has also proved to be a bomb of the 70's and survives as a quarterly reprint for merchandising sake. All the "Tony" books created around *Superman*, *Batman* and *Foran*, as well as the new DC Special and *Star Wars Spectacular*, are all reprint. And as of this writing, 8 to 10 year and mystery titles are in the fire cancellation, while *House of Secrets* goes bi-monthly and pushes its backlog into the 1980's.

On the brighter side, *Knight Rider*, *The New Testament* and the DC Society of Super Villains are to arrive soon, and comicizing Jerry Bock, has joined DC's staff in an editorial capacity. Among his first projects, Jerry will be editing a touch of perspective to DC's revival of *All-Star Comics*, as well as providing a letter of complaint about a subscription by Ray Thomas.

The DC Super-Adventures by Neil Adams has finally made it to the printers, and should go on sale before the year is out. The same can also be said for the hardcover *Secret Origins* of the Super Heroes, also sporting an Adams cover.

And in one of their wisest moves



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resulting in *Tongue 4's*, "*Project: Secret Fang*." This development has the Sky-Gods creating a human/satan tooth master out of one of the covenant, with the ultimate result being a confrontation with *Tongue* over the top pits.

In the other covenant/word and sword series, *Bogart*, our hero fights ghouls, zombies and hobgoblins while attempting to recover a valuable scepter from a living mummy.

In a more contemporary vein, *Dr. Spalder* 19 contains "*Loch of the Leviathan*," the story of an octopus-like being living for centuries in a Scottish lake. *Tongue* makes an appearance in a flashback sequence, and a mysterious Laird Rowenscroft is at the crux of the affair. *Spalder* 20 will return the mummy *Loch* to life, so that he, *Spalder* and *Loket* can literally go through the events depicted in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

On the East Coast, Gold Key is reportedly preparing a science-fiction adventure book that will feature adaptations of classics of the genre. Preliminary plans call for a format longer than the standard 25-cent size, to be titled *Omega*, but since Marvel also has plans for that name, GK's will probably be changed.

Next issue, MEDIASCENE will present more on Jerry's new Marvel projects, Charlton's quest for movie success, and a unique event which is destined to change the course of comic history. ☐

COMING ATTRACTIONS



Hard Times



Hard Times



Hard Times



Take A Hard Ride



Take A Hard Ride

It's show time in the animal kingdom for the next few months, thanks to the \$100 million success of Universal's moon-shark saga, *Jaws*. Gathering for the boxoffice banquet is a seething menagerie of cinematic creatures whose ferocity is perhaps second only to its promoters'. At the head of the line putting the bite on 1976 is that most horrible monster—the sequel, *Jaws II*.

Mako—The Jaws of Death is another shark thriller currently filtering, co-starring *Grease* blond, the story of a psychotic who trains sharks to attack and kill his enemies. Other fast fish up to surface include *Dolphin Island*, based on the Arthur C. Clarke novel. That there's *Piranha*, the chronicle of a crazed California aquarium owner who spreads terror in Beverly Hills by stocking swimming pools with the tiny toothy tony.

films face fishy future

Returning from TV and movie *Ambo* to take part in the kill are two forgotten features, the documentary *Blue Water, White Death*, and Cornell Wilde's *Shark's Treasure*. Finally there's the return of the Don Reynolds film *Shark*, in which an underwater cameraman is attacked and eaten. Live on the big screen. (Who says you don't get more for your money nowadays?)

The modern *Moby Dick* metaphor of *Jaws* is also finding a home on dry land with the furry fury of a romping bear in *Yellowstone Park*, going under the early classic title *Claws*. And *Irwin Allen* has the battle of the Bushbabe nipped out for his *Sawm*.

Killer crazies are scheduled to run on a new one from the Australians in a film under development called *Remains of the Day*. United Artists has a property known as *Allegator* on its schedule. Unfortunately, UA found out, after expensive preproduction work, that *Allegators* are lethargic and lazy and almost never attack humans.

All in all, the jumble of *Jaws* spinoffs is reminiscent of the mania generated by Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, which began Ben, William, Fritz, *The Killer Bee*, etc., following the extremes of this, and the 24-72 disaster trends as an example, 1976 may finally be the year America goes to the dogs!

Meanwhile, *Jaws* director Steven Spielberg is extending his creative talents to include original screenwriting for his next film project, *A Close Encounter of the Third Kind*. Spielberg will also direct *Close Encounters*, which will probably disappoint him from working on *Jaws II*.

Charles Bronson punishes his way across the screen this fall as a bare-knuckled professional fighter in Columbia's *Hard Times*, James Coburn and Jill Ireland co-star in



The Oregon Film



The Oregon Film



Take A Hard Ride



Take A Hard Ride



Take A Hard Ride

the typically tough, 1930's tale of back-room brawling and bloody action, *Bronson* returns again in the violent western murder mystery *Headheart Pass*. Based on the best-selling novel by Alister (Gass of *Newsweek*) MacLean, *Pass* takes place in a weather-beaten trap town where deaths occur with alarming frequency. Also starring in the production are Jill Ireland, Ben Johnson and Richard Crenna, with direction by Tom (Broadway) Givens.

For Christmas, George Segal will be starring in the 35-year-old sequel to the classic *Melrose Place*, titled *The Blacklist*. . . or the *Melrose Place* Film Again. Also being prepared is Richard D. and 4 Maskewitz's Lester's version of the *Ballad of Robin and Marion*, starring Sean Connery as an aging Robin Hood, Audrey Hepburn as Maid Marion, and Robert Shaw as the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, eluded and dunned by Richard Harris along the way.

Reverend fantasy is slated for Columbia release by way of *Stirling* (Twentieth Century) Silfstein's production of *Man's Journey*, from a screenplay by the producer. Douglas Trumbull has been signed to direct *Journey* on the strength of his special effects achievements in 1968's *A Space Odyssey*, *The Andromeda Strain*, and his producing/writing/directing job on *Shogun*.

Turns of the century comedy is another field being explored next year, with the James Cagney, Michael Caine, Elliott Gould, Diane Keaton self-cracking caper, *Harry and Walter Go to New York*. Mark (The *Goodbye* *Hotel*) is directing this story of two struggling middle-class men whose aspirations carry them into a more lucrative vocational line.

Arthur Truman Capote makes his acting debut next year in Neil Simon's original comedy screenplay, *Murder by Death*, co-starring Ellen Barkin. This time, laughs are focused on four famous detectives who gather at weekend parties in a New England country manor, trying to solve a murder yet to be committed.

jolson sings holmes sleuths

Voices and images from the past may be haunting the theaters again soon as the major film companies watch and wait for the ultimate results of Columbia's release of 1946's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The *Hound* of the Baskervilles, has met with some success already, and as series bumps of black and white classics could be forthcoming.

20th Century-Fox has a diversified fall schedule planned, beginning with their current release, *Take A Hard Ride*, *John Brown*, *Find*



Early Brown Star



Early Brown Star



Early Brown Star



Early Brown Star



Early Brown Star

FALL FILM FARE

In a few other sexy spots along the way, finally, *The Cover Girl Models* (The Girls With The Gunstuffed Spreads) expose themselves in the violent world of spies, counter-spies and the fashion industry.

Billy Jack Enterprises, the people who package "erect" videotapes, are back again this fall, with Tom Laughlin and Ron O'Neal as two lascivious cowboys in *The Master Sexfighter*. The original Billy Jack and his sequel, *Trial of Billy Jack*, are also in re-release, and plans are already underway for B.J. to expand and explore new fields.

First on the Billy Jack agenda is the Bicentennial production of *Billy Jack III*, to be followed by *The Deadliest Spy*, and then perhaps a film starring Jane Fonda. While all this progresses however, TV movies, Saturday afternoon, kiddie matinee type features and probably children's books are being planned.

Stanley Kubrick's *Dennis* returns to the movie musical genre this Christmas to present the true-filled *Easy Lady*. Liz Minnelli, Kurt Russell and Gene Hackman star in *Easy*. *Dennis*'s first full-fledged musical in 15 years.

Ray Rogers is trading the comeback trail out in Lubbock, Texas with the current filming of *McKinnick and T.J. Whittier* or not Rogers will sing in the movie has still to be decided, but the most important problem would appear to be finding



Cover Girl Models



Cover Girl Models



Cover Girl Models

a replacement for Trigger. Rod Taylor's last complete film script is slated to go before the cameras next year with the adaptation of Morris West's *Salomander*. Sidney Mardian on the *Great Escape* is tentatively set to direct.

Lin Carter's barbarian hero Thangar of Lemuria is apparently coming to the screen in 77-78, according to film producer Milton Sebaty. Three films are in the works. *Thangar* is the *Valley of Demons*, *Thangar* is the *City of Serenore*, and *Thangar*. See of *Thangar*, along with Edgar Rice Burroughs' *At the Earth's Core* as a follow-up to this year's *Lord of the Rings*. *Spider-Man* and *Walt Disney* are also on Salomander's agenda, as well as a remake of the *Corn of the Cat People*.

John O'Hall and the *Lost* *Alphas* has just completed the screenplay to what he terms "the most violent Viet Nam War epic, *Apocalypse Now*. Francis Ford Coppola (Director I and II) Ford Coppola is planning to direct the mammoth project in Australia early next year, and will spend most of the money on acquiring lots of Army equipment and paying the salaries of the three leading stars. Based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the story deals with an Army captain detailed to kill a crazed fellow officer who has be-



Cover Girl Models



Cover Girl Models



Cover Girl Models

come a savage jungle animal. Coppola would like to get Steve McQueen to portray the killer captain, and Marlon Brando as the crazed commander.

Production is due to commence soon on Roman Polanski's newest project, *The Phantom*, featuring him once again with his Christmas star, Jack Nicholson.

"You can't tell a gunfighter by his sequin" would appear to be the only habit the wilderness ringer of well-known westerner Henry Lee Van Clief. As part of their publicity for *Talk A Hard Word*, 20th Century Fox revealed a number of interesting things about Van Clief's private life. First, despite his tough-guy looks, he's a humanitarian. "We filmed on three islands with tough terrain for men and horses. I insisted that the horses be protected from the duration of the filming." And, "My father taught me about guns when I was a kid. Every time I've handed a gun I check to see if it's loaded."

He's a music lover who plays the harmonica, mandolin, guitar and piano, and has his California music room equipped with a concert grand. In fact, he's so serious about the matter that he owns both LVC Records and Lee Van Clief Music, which have issued songs composed and sung by him.

And you thought he was just another pretty face. ☺

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"THE ADVENTURES OF Sweet Gwendoline" BY JOHN WILLIE



In response to the Internet generated by our special pin-up issue, MEDIASCIENCE has acquired a small number of copies of the French book, *Les Filles De Pepler* (The Paper Girls). This 130-page volume contains a wealth of sensational art, illustrating the breathtaking beauty of the girls of the comics. American, European and underground artists are all represented in this hard-to-find item with 32 pages in full, fabulous color. We have only a few of these treasures available now for a limited time only—\$5.00 post. 40 postage. A must for all those who love girls—and cement!



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